

/219 cont. /

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Marriages which oppose the bilateral extension of the law of incest are criticized and are prohibited, and anyone who contravenes this law is automatically placed outside society.

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Unmarried men are few, and, they say, only the priest practices celibacy.

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The number of persons of advanced age is very small among the Sanemá. Among the Nabudub we saw only one old man.

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In the majority of cases, sickness has a magical cause and the theurgists attempt to cure those who are within their field of action. We did not penetrate into this intimate sphere of Sanemá culture and the little that we heard is set forth in the section which deals with religious and magical aspects of these Indians.

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We were not present at any funeral among the Sanemá, but our young informant of the upper Erebató told us in great detail about the death of his father.

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He had gone out to the forest. There he had found an eagle. As eagles are men, they may only be killed if they are enemies of one's pueblo. The father asked the eagle whether he was a Waica or a Sanemá, and, when it answered that it was a Waica, the Sanemá man killed it with his arrow. Naturally he observed all the taboos that are obligatory for a hunter who kills an eagle. A few days later he became sick. He had a very high fever and remembered that when he picked up the eagle he got the impression that it was feverish, and, as birds of prey are often sent by a theurgist of neighboring enemies in order to kill the people, that explained everything. There was no reason to look for any other cause, the diagnosis was clear, the eagle had transmitted its sickness to the hunter. He became worse as the days went by and /220/ finally died; but he had first explained to the members of his family the cause of his sickness and the reason for his certain death.

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Immediately after the death, the whole family burst into tears and began to shout; meanwhile several men went in search of the material necessary for raising the corpse. For this there is needed a quantity of stakes and leaves with which a sort of cylindrical coffin is made, and, after the dead person is placed